

The Beauty 1091

Chapter 1091 Martial Arts Manuals

Hu Fei's efficiency was astonishing, mobilizing more than twenty people overnight to rush to Xiangnan City. To make things easier for Ling Chen, Pang Jiulin led his team and prisoners of the Ling Family to a safe house. It wasn't until early the next morning that Ling Chen emptied the room full of books, transporting them out of the Ling Family with four large trucks.

He made a phone call to Pang Jiulin, who immediately contacted the higher-ups to report the results of the operation.

Upon learning of the discovery of the Ling Family's vast wealth, the authorities were very pleased, giving verbal praise to Pang Jiulin and his team.

The confiscation of assets worth hundreds of billions was undoubtedly a significant achievement, possibly even warranting Pang Jiulin's rank promotion by one level.

After the operation, Pang Jiulin had to stay behind to wait for government support to arrive. Ling Chen, not being a member of the Lonely Wolf, was not obligated to stay. After bidding farewell to Pang Jiulin, Ling Chen followed the trucks straight along the highway towards East Sea City.

After over a dozen hours of driving, the four large trucks finally arrived at the base in East Sea City.

At this time, Hu Fei and Tang Guolun were already waiting outside the base. As the cargo boxes opened and looking at the full load of books, Hu Fei widened his eyes and said: "Ling Chen, have you gone mad? At your age, still thinking about studying? I haven't seen you work this hard before."

Ling Chen laughed and said: "Fatty, you shouldn't underestimate these books. You couldn't buy them even if you had the money. Alright, quickly call someone to move the books inside."

Upon entering the base, Ling Chen had just sat down when Qiu Yong and the others walked in from outside.

"Sixth brother, why did you call us here?" Yuan Yun's voice rang out even before he got close.

"Tsk tsk! Sixth brother, where did you find all these old books? There's so many, are you planning to open a secondhand bookstore?" Wei Jiahao asked with keen interest.

"Eighth brother, don't underestimate these books." Ling Chen pointed to a stack of aging paper books and said: "Take a look, I guarantee once you pick them up, you won't want to put them down."

"Really?" Xia Yue glanced at Ling Chen with suspicion, and while speaking, picked up a book and opened it. With just one look, Xia Yue's expression froze, filled with shock.

Seeing Xia Yue stand there motionless, as if she was in a trance, Yuan Yun couldn't resist asking: "Fifth sister, what's the matter with you?" As he spoke, he walked behind Xia Yue, preparing to pat her shoulder. However, when the corner of his eye caught sight of the words on the page, his extended hand froze in mid-air, staring intently at the page and not moving his gaze for a long time.

"Heavenly Calculation Blade Skills... Is this really... Heavenly Calculation Blade Skills? Impossible, it must be a mistake, Heavenly Calculation Blade Skills have been lost for hundreds of years..."

Hearing Yuan Yun muttering to himself, Qiu Yong and the others immediately became very interested.

Heavenly Calculation Blade Skills!

They had all heard Yuan Yun mention this set of blade skills before; as an expert specializing in blade skills, Yuan Yun had researched many blade skills, among which, Heavenly Calculation Blade Skills were the top tier he had always yearned for. However, the Heavenly Calculation Blade Skills had been lost for over two hundred years, and no one in the Martial Arts world knew of them anymore.

"Sixth brother, is this... real?" Qiu Yong looked at Ling Chen and asked incredulously.

Before Ling Chen could respond, Yuan Yun was already unable to contain his excitement, shouting: "It's real, it's real, this is the genuine Heavenly Calculation Blade Skills. My God! Sixth brother, tell me, where did you find this blade skills manual?"

Ling Chen smiled and said: "I found it in the Ling Family." Without hesitation, Ling Chen shared everything he saw and heard at the Ling Family. Then, pointing to the stacked mountain of books on the ground, he said: "I brought all those books here, take a look, see if there's anything suitable for you..." Before he could finish speaking, Qiu Yong and the others had already rushed over to select martial arts manuals.

For martial artists, perhaps no one can resist such temptation.

Before long, Qiu Yong and the others had picked out martial arts manuals suited to their styles, even Zhang Zhongfeng chose one. His specialty was archery, and in terms of archery skills, no one in the world could surpass him. However, besides archery, Zhang Zhongfeng was weak in other areas, such as close combat, so he picked a martial arts skill that perfectly complemented his weaknesses.

Obtaining martial arts manuals to their liking, everyone couldn't help but smile, even Xu Ming, who normally kept a straight face, had a hint of a smile.

"Sixth brother." Qiu Yong spoke up: "I think you should expand your influence."

"Big brother, what do you mean?"

"Martial artists don't care about mundane things like money; only martial arts and reputation draw their interest. Also, a top-tier martial arts manual can drive many martial artists crazy. You now possess so many martial arts manuals, equivalent to having a mountain of treasures. If you release the news, I believe many will flock to you."

Qiu Yong's suggestion was not something Ling Chen hadn't considered, but... this approach had both advantages and disadvantages, and was fraught with risks.

"Big brother, you're not wrong, but what we need is loyalty, and many things can't be solved merely by numbers."

"Sixth brother is right, it's wise to be cautious about this kind of matter, after all, there are quite a few with ulterior motives," Xia Yue chimed in.

"To accomplish great things, some risks must be taken." Xu Ming, who had been silent, suddenly spoke: "Do you know how the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion rose to power? When it was founded, it engaged in many unsavory acts, like stealing others' martial arts and repeatedly looting manuals. They knew that as long as they controlled enough resources, they could draw many to join them. We must admit, the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion's approach was practical; within a mere thirty years, they rapidly escalated from a small, emerging force to being one of the top authorities in the Martial Arts world, even holding the power of discourse. The Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion now enjoys an elevated status and reputation, mainly because they are adept at rehabilitating their image."

Hearing this, Ling Chen couldn't help but say: "Second brother, are you suggesting... I follow the old path of the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion?"

"You could give it a shot; this world inherently operates on survival of the fittest. No matter how many people you bring in, you can sift them layer by layer, excluding those with ulterior motives. Besides, you won't be handing over the martial arts manuals directly to them. You need to establish a proper system, allowing them to ascend layer by layer, where the higher they climb, the more resources they receive. Throughout this process, they will gradually foster a sense of belonging. Sixth brother, the Great Wall wasn't built in a day; such endeavors take time and cannot be rushed. If you're willing, we can help oversee things for you."

"Really?" Ling Chen's eyes lit up.

Chapter 1092 - 1099: Martial Arts Factions

Actually, Zhong Wei was quite tempted by Qiu Yong's suggestion, but the problem was that he lacked the manpower for this kind of help. Tang Guolun and Hu Fei were not martial artists and couldn't get involved in this matter. If he had the help of people like Qiu Yong, things would undoubtedly be easier.

"Sixth brother, if you have this idea, we must come up with a flashy name to overpower the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion in terms of momentum." Yuan Yun grinned.

"Why not call it Dragon Tiger Tower? The name is so powerful, don't you think?" Wei Jiahao enthusiastically suggested.

Xia Yue rolled her eyes at Wei Jiahao, discouraging him: "Eighth brother, your name is too tacky, at least pick a more elegant name."

Wei Jiahao awkwardly scratched his head and said with a smile: "Fifth sister, you know I haven't read much, how about... you pick an elegant name for Sixth brother?"

"I..." Xia Yue opened her mouth, thinking back and forth, but couldn't come up with a good name.

"Alright!" Qiu Yong said, "We're all a bunch of rough people, couldn't possibly think of any elegant name. Sixth brother, it's better you say, what name is more suitable?"

Zhong Wei thought for a moment and smiled slightly: "Big brother, just as you said, we're all a bunch of rough people, among those who practice martial arts, how many are elegant, so there's no need for us to come up with a very elegant name. Actually, the name Eighth brother came up with is not bad, Dragon Tiger Tower, it's a bit tacky, but the more tacky, the more approachable, don't you think?"

Xu Ming nodded, "Sixth brother's idea is not bad, that's indeed the reason. Well, since everyone has no objections, let's call it Dragon Tiger Tower, after all, it's just a name, no need for so much fuss."

Just like that, with everyone's few words, the name Dragon Tiger Tower was decided.

Establishing a martial arts power isn't something that can be done with just a few words, it involves various aspects. Frankly, Zhong Wei never thought he would come to this point. However, the establishment of Dragon Tiger Tower is imperative. Just as Xu Ming said before, survival of the fittest, to gain more influence, to make others dare not bully you, the only way is to constantly strengthen yourself.

To perfect all aspects of Dragon Tiger Tower, Zhong Wei and the others gathered in the meeting room to discuss the direction of development. Unknowingly, it was already past nine o'clock in the evening. The whole day everyone stayed in the meeting room, eating boxed lunches.

Although it was tiring, everyone was enthusiastic, because they knew very well what the establishment of Dragon Tiger Tower meant, in the future days, it could change the entire martial arts landscape.

Until midnight, the discussion finally came to an end, and everyone dispersed. Soon, only Zhong Wei was left in the meeting room.

Holding an empty tea cup, Zhong Wei leaned back in his chair, sighed slowly. Establishing Dragon Tiger Tower, besides dealing with the Ling Family, there was another reason. Just now, he didn't say it in front of everyone.

Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion!

Zhong Wei needed to guard against the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion. In the past, Zhong Wei would never have this idea, because Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion was his friend, and Su He was even his master. But now it's different, his father is listed by Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion as the murderer of Su Zhengyang's parents, once the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion finds Ling Kun, they will act against him, as a son, Zhong Wei would never stand idly by.

Although it's not clear whether Ling Kun was really involved, anyway, Zhong Wei needs to plan ahead and prepare everything.

The next day.

In the morning, at nine o'clock, Zhong Wei drove alone to Hongyu Group.

Before coming, Zhong Wei already called Nanrong Hao. It wasn't about other concerns, last time when he came to Hongyu Group, the receptionist didn't let him in, even Wei Jun said it was the chairman's order, not letting him step into the top floor. To avoid the incident last time, Zhong Wei had to ask Nanrong Hao for help.

With Nanrong Hao leading the way, no one dared to stop Zhong Wei. After entering the elevator, Nanrong Hao asked: "Brother Chen, what are you doing here looking for Sister this time?"

"There are some matters I want her help with." After saying this, Zhong Wei asked curiously: "Eh! What have you been busy with lately, haven't seen you for half a month?"

"What else could I be busy with, isn't it for the Liu Family's matters."

"Liu Family?" Zhong Wei asked puzzled: "Wasn't that Liu Wei kid arrested, what are you wasting energy on him for?"

"Not Liu Wei, but the Liu Family." Nanrong Hao said, "If it wasn't for the Liu Family as backing, would Liu Wei dare to do that? Humph! That Liu Family bunch, wants to use our Hongyu Group as a stepping stone, but they don't even look at themselves, what kind of character they are. Because of this matter, my sister is very angry, she has already said, won't let go until the Liu Family is taken down. Recently, my sister has found a lot of people, not only Liu Family's business opponents, but also some friends of my sister in business. Now, my sister has united many enterprises, implementing a blockade against Liu Family, driving their goods and products out of the market." Saying this, Nanrong Hao couldn't help but laugh proudly.

"Brother Chen, do you know how much the Liu Family has lost in these half months?"

"How much?"

Nanrong Hao held up two fingers and said, "Plus two billion. Now, the Liu Family has already started selling off fixed assets, many of their sub-companies have announced bankruptcy."

"Is that so?" Zhong Wei smiled, unexpected that Nanrong Wanqing also had such a ruthless side. Looking at her stance, she won't let go without annihilating the Liu Family.

While talking, the two came to the top floor by elevator.

"Mr. Nanrong, Mr. Ling, do you have business with the chairman?" Secretary Wang Lan stood up and asked. Seeing Zhong Wei, Wang Lan smiled sweetly, welcoming his arrival.

"Lan, is my sister in the office?"

"Yes, the chairman is meeting guests, why don't you sit in the lounge for a while?"

"Guests?" Nanrong Hao asked: "What guests?"

"They're from the Liu Family, Liu Yun."

"Wow! So it's the head of the Liu Family who's come, perfect timing, Brother Chen, let's go in and see. Liu Family coming all the way to see my sister, I guess they're here to seek peace." Saying this, Nanrong Hao walked to the office door, not even knocking, directly pushed it open and went in.

Zhong Wei followed behind Nanrong Hao, as they entered, they saw a middle-aged man in a suit sitting on the sofa, and there was a young man standing beside him, seemingly an attendant. That middle-aged man was about fifty years old, well-dressed, wearing glasses, gentlemanly. If he wasn't known in advance, it was hard to imagine he was the head of the Liu Family.

From any aspect, this man's demeanor didn't seem like that of a family head.

Besides the Liu Family people in the office, Zhong Wei and Liang Zhao Hui were also present, one standing on either side behind Nanrong Wanqing, seemingly protecting her safety.

Chapter 1093 - 1100: The Liu Family's Terms

Upon seeing Ling Chen and Nanrong Hao entering, Nanrong Wanqing was slightly startled, obviously not expecting Ling Chen's presence. However, she quickly gathered herself, focusing her gaze back on Liu Yun.

"Mr. Liu, I think there's nothing left for us to discuss." Nanrong Wanqing picked up her tea cup. Anyone with a sense of propriety could tell that it was a gesture to see guests off.

However, Liu Yun did not catch on. With a frown, he said, "Miss Nanrong, aren't you pushing things too far? I've personally come to East Sea City, giving you enough respect. What more do you want?"

"Oh, my!" Before Nanrong Wanqing could speak, Nanrong Hao had already taken over the conversation, sneering, "The Liu family sure thinks highly of themselves. Mr. Liu, I must ask you, why should we give you respect? Who do you think you are? When you instructed your son Liu Wei to trouble our Hongyu Group, did you consider showing respect to the Nanrong Family? Hmph! Coming here now to throw your weight around, I think you've come to the wrong place."

"How impudent!" The young man beside Liu Yun said coldly, "Who do you think you are to speak here?"

Nanrong Hao sized up the speaker and, curling his lips, said, "I'm called Nanrong Hao, this territory of the Hongyu Group belongs to me, so why shouldn't I speak? And you, who do you think you are to interrupt while adults are talking?"

"You..." The young man was about to lash out but was stopped by Liu Yun's glare.

"So it's Young Master Nanrong. My apologies, Liu Qing was rude earlier; I hope Young Master Nanrong won't take offense." Liu Yun said flatly.

"Liu Yun, control your Liu family members. Don't think you're still on home ground here." With those words, not allowing Liu Yun to continue, Nanrong Hao added, "Alright! If there's nothing else, then please leave, we have other matters to discuss."

Hearing this, Liu Yun showed no intention of getting up but instead looked at Nanrong Wanqing and said, "Miss Nanrong, are you really not considering reconciliation?"

"Mr. Liu, I've repeated this many times, there is no chance of reconciliation between your Liu Family and us." Nanrong Wanqing responded coldly, "If you knew it would come to this, why do it in the first place? Mr. Liu, since your Liu Family did this, be prepared for the consequences. Well, I've said what needs to be said, I think it's pointless to waste any more time here, please leave!"

"Well, Nanrong Wanqing!" Liu Qing said coldly, "Even a cornered dog will jump over the wall. You wish to annihilate our Liu family, fine! I'll fight you to the very end, even if it means mutual destruction."

Hearing this, Nanrong Hao snorted, "Do you Liu people even have the capability to fight? If I were you, I'd obediently return to the Liu Family, pack your things, and move to a town where no one knows you. That's your best ending."

"Nanrong Hao, if my days are miserable, don't expect the Nanrong Family to have good days either, especially you two." Liu Qing said through gritted teeth, an icy threat lingering in his eyes.

"Are you threatening us?"

"So what if I am." Liu Qing replied coldly, staring directly into Nanrong Hao's eyes, "I'm giving you three days to cease all attacks on the Liu Family, otherwise, after three days, you won't even know how you died."

"Good, very good!" Facing Liu Qing's threat, Nanrong Hao didn't get angry, instead, he laughed.

"Liu Qing, you want to play dirty with me? No problem, I, Nanrong Hao, might lack skills in other areas, but I've got some experience in this. I originally only wanted your Liu family to go bankrupt for some satisfaction, but it seems bankruptcy isn't enough. How about this, the distance from East Sea City to your Liu Family is over a thousand miles. When you walk out that door, if you make it back safely to your family, I'll admit defeat and cease all actions against the Liu Family. On the contrary, if you can't make it back... then you shouldn't concern yourself with the fate of the Liu Family anymore. My intentions are clear, you should understand. So, are you interested in continuing the game with me?"

Upon hearing Nanrong Hao's proposal, Liu Yun and Liu Qing's expressions changed. Nanrong Hao's meaning was crystal clear; with the Hongyu Group's power, they wouldn't even leave East Sea City alive, let alone return to their family.

Seeing the two hesitating, Nanrong Hao sneered, "Liu Qing, weren't you very arrogant just now? Why aren't you saying anything now? Are you too afraid to continue playing with me? Tch! I thought you had more guts, but it seems not, really disappointing."

Faced with Nanrong Hao's mockery, Liu Qing's expression became rather unpleasant. No matter how furious he was, he dared not retaliate.

This life-threatening game he didn't dare to play; he initially intended to intimidate Nanrong Hao, not expecting him to take it seriously. Moreover, judging by Nanrong Hao's eager demeanor, he seemed very interested in such games.

"Miss Nanrong, I'm willing to transfer half of the Liu family's shares to Hongyu Group, hoping you'll show mercy to the Liu family." Suddenly, Liu Yun, who had remained silent, spoke up.

Liu Yun's proposal caused a momentary flicker in Nanrong Wanqing's gaze, but she quickly returned to her normal expression.

After contemplating for a moment, Nanrong Wanqing did not directly respond to Liu Yun's proposal; instead, she turned to Nanrong Hao and asked, "What do you think?"

Seeing Nanrong Wanqing handing the decision over to Nanrong Hao, Liu Yun couldn't help but speak up, "Young Master Nanrong, although the Liu family isn't as strong as before, half of the shares are worth over a billion."

Over a billion?

Nanrong Hao's eyes lit up as he thoughtfully stroked his chin.

Seeing Nanrong Hao showing interest, Liu Yun seized the opportunity and continued, "Young Master Nanrong, the Liu family also has many fixed assets. If you agree, I can transfer some of these assets to the Nanrong Family as an apology."

"Oh! Mr. Liu is quite generous, but sadly, although your conditions are good, I cannot accept them."

Liu Yun was stunned.

"Why? Young Master Nanrong, we..."

"Enough!" Nanrong Hao waved impatiently, interrupting Liu Yun, "Do you take us for fools? Listen, Liu, don't think I don't know what you're planning. I've got two words for you: No way."

Having said this, Nanrong Hao pointed to the door and added, "Two more words for you, get out! If you linger any longer, I'll have security throw you out."

"Alright, since the Nanrong Family won't accept my terms, there's nothing left to say. Miss Nanrong, our Liu family won't be pushed around. We'll see who has the last laugh." Throwing down these harsh words, Liu Yun and Liu Qing immediately left the office.

Chapter 1094 - 1101: Business Negotiations (1)

After Liu Yun and his group left, Nanrong Wanqing looked approvingly at Nanrong Hao, nodding, "Not bad, you've been improving rapidly lately. It seems I can confidently entrust Hongyu Group to you in the future."

Nanrong Hao grinned, "Sister, someone as smart as me wouldn't get fooled."

"Haozi, what's going on?" Ling Chen asked. He had been watching from the sidelines, not wanting to interrupt since it was a dispute between the Nanrong Family and the Liu Family. Moreover, the Nanrong Family currently had the upper hand, so his intervention was unnecessary. However, he didn't quite grasp the meaning behind Nanrong Wanqing and Nanrong Hao's exchange.

"Chen, you're an outsider here," Nanrong Hao chuckled proudly. "Let me explain it to you."

After hearing Nanrong Hao's explanation, Ling Chen finally understood. It turned out Liu Yun was offering to transfer half of the shares to Hongyu Group, which wasn't beneficial. Instead, Liu Yun's condition revealed his cunning nature.

If Hongyu Group accepted Liu Yun's offer, it would bind Liu Family Business and Hongyu Group together. Then, Hongyu Group would become the major shareholder of Liu Family Business. As a result, Hongyu Group would have to spend energy managing Liu Family Business.

As for the Liu Family, hitching a ride with Hongyu Group's big ship would not only preserve the Liu Family but allow them to receive lucrative dividends annually. With Hongyu Group's capabilities, Liu Family Business would eventually revive, prosper, and grow stronger, potentially earning several times more than before.

Liu Yun was indeed cunning; the condition seemed tempting but was actually an attempt to climb up to the Nanrong Family.

"Good job." Ling Chen raised his thumb, praising, "Haozi, spotting Liu Yun's trick shows you already have a business mind."

Hearing Ling Chen's praise, Nanrong Hao appeared exceptionally delighted. Then, as if recalling something, he coughed lightly and shifted the topic to Nanrong Wanqing.

"Sister, Chen has something to discuss with you. Um... you two go ahead. I have matters to handle, I won't be joining you." Without waiting for Nanrong Wanqing to speak, Nanrong Hao dashed out of the office, shutting the door behind him.

Standing outside the office, Nanrong Hao signaled to Wang Lan, instructing, "Don't interrupt them, hold off any matters, handle them later."

Wang Lan, being a wise woman, understood Nanrong Hao's intention, smilingly nodded.

Inside the office, Nanrong Wanqing looked at Ling Chen, feeling oddly uneasy seeing him now.

"You..." After a moment of silence, Nanrong Wanqing finally spoke, "Why did you come to see me?"

Ling Chen smiled slightly and sat on the sofa, saying, "I want to discuss a deal with you."

"Discuss a deal?" Nanrong Wanqing seemed taken aback. She speculated the reasons Ling Chen might look for her but hadn't considered he was here for business matters, she even thought... She stopped her thoughts and concentrated on Ling Chen's eyes. His gaze assured her he wasn't joking.

"What business are you proposing?" Once it involved work, Nanrong Wanqing instantly regained her professionalism.

"I know Hongyu Group invested heavily in redevelopment plans in the Old City area, even bought a lot of land there. I hope you can transfer a plot of land to me."

Indeed, Ling Chen was serious about discussing business this time. To build his own forces, he surely needed a base. Dragon Tiger Tower and the base were different entities, not to be conflated, otherwise, they would cause trouble. After careful consideration, finding Nanrong Wanqing for land acquisition seemed most convenient.

Upon hearing Ling Chen's request, Nanrong Wanqing appeared quite surprised, asking him confusedly, "Is it you who wants to buy?"

"Yes."

"Although the redevelopment in the Old City will take years to complete, the land prices there have increased several times. With the current situation, no one would sell their land. Just wait a few more years, once the Old City flourishes, prices will rise several more times."

Ling Chen nodded, saying, "I know, that's why I came to you for help. Wanqing, Hongyu Group owns so many plots, casually selling one to me wouldn't mean much of a loss to you."

Nanrong Wanqing pondered and said, "I can sell it to you, but even at a friendly price, it's still quite a sum. Are you sure you can afford it?"

She wasn't underestimating Ling Chen; the cheapest plot in the Old City would cost eight figures, even at a friendly price. If priced according to market trends, it might be fifty percent higher. Ling Chen's financial situation was well-known to her; apart from earning a five-figure salary during his time at Hongyu Group, he had no other income. Therefore, this amount was undoubtedly astronomical for him.

Before Ling Chen could speak, Nanrong Wanqing had already made up her mind. She shifted the conversation saying, "Forget it! You've helped the Nanrong Family numerous times before, even saved my life several times. Since you need land, I'll send you a plot on behalf of the Nanrong Family."

"That's not necessary," Ling Chen interjected, "We can separate friendship from business. You sell, I buy, I won't let you suffer, nor do I want any favors. Name your price, any figure is fine."

This bastard... Nanrong Wanqing cursed inwardly; she had made her decision, but he didn't appreciate it.

"Fine, since you have money, one million will do." Nanrong Wanqing responded impulsively, knowing it was said in jest.

"One million? That's too little." Ling Chen had researched before coming; the land prices in the Old City were terrifyingly high, one million wouldn't cut it, even tenfold wouldn't guarantee a purchase.

Considering this, Ling Chen pulled a checkbook from his pocket, filled in some numbers, and handed it to Nanrong Wanqing.

"Wanqing, see if this amount fits? If it's less, I'll add some more."

Glancing at the figure on the check, Nanrong Wanqing's jaw dropped. As the chairman of Hongyu Group, she was no stranger to handling billions and hundreds of billions. Nevertheless, staring at the series of zeros on the check, Nanrong Wanqing still felt a bit stunned.

Raising her eyes to meet Ling Chen's with a smile on his face, Nanrong Wanqing's gaze grew a bit complicated. At this moment, she realized this Ling Chen was different from the one she previously knew.

A hundred million isn't much; many wealthy individuals could produce such an amount. However, Ling Chen, who months ago was earning a five-figure salary as an ascending white-collar worker in security, could now casually fill out a check worth a hundred million. Such a transformation was truly unexpected.

Chapter 1095 - 1102: Business Negotiations (Part 2)

"What? Not enough?" Seeing Nanrong Wanqing hesitated to speak, Ling Chen couldn't help but ask, "Should I add a few more million?"

"No, it's not necessary." Nanrong Wanqing snapped back to reality, looking at Ling Chen with a complex expression. In the past, if there was anything worth being proud of, it was her identity as the chairman of the Hongyu Group. But now, it seemed that this identity which she used to take pride in had become unimpressive in the presence of Ling Chen.

After much hesitation, Nanrong Wanqing decided not to inquire about Ling Chen's source of funds. In the past, she could ask, but now it wasn't appropriate as they were just ordinary friends. Being just ordinary friends meant she shouldn't pry into his privacy.

"I will accept this check. When you have time, go to the Old City with Nanrong Hao, and whichever piece of land you fancy, tell him directly and let him act as a representative to sign the purchase contract with you."

"Okay." Ling Chen nodded and said, "I'll be on my way then. You carry on." With that, Ling Chen stood up and headed straight for the office door.

Upon reaching the door, Ling Chen's steps slightly faltered, and he couldn't help but turn around, only to find Nanrong Wanqing's gaze locked onto him. As their eyes met, Ling Chen smiled lightly and reminded her, "Don't overwork yourself, make sure to rest."

"Thank you for your concern!" Nanrong Wanqing opened her mouth, holding back many words in her heart, but only these few came out.

Leaving the chairman's office, Ling Chen greeted Wang Lan and then stepped into the elevator. He found it odd as Wang Lan's gaze had seemed peculiar, somewhat... intimate.

In a morning's time, accompanied by Nanrong Hao, Ling Chen quickly chose a piece of land, spanning over fifteen hundred square meters, located at the southernmost part of the Old City. The main reason for selecting this area was because it was relatively secluded, at quite a distance away from the busy downtown.

In fact, Qiu Yong and others had suggested to Ling Chen that the location of Dragon Tiger Tower should emulate Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion, selecting a secluded, unpeopled area, but Ling Chen dismissed this suggestion outright without a second thought.

It's absurd; what era are we in now, still holding onto those old ways? Besides, the reason Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion didn't relocate was due to its historical heritage. A long time ago, Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion no longer hid deep in the mountains, with branches established in major cities like Beijing. Therefore, Ling Chen would never be like Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion.

In his view, East Sea City was undoubtedly the best choice because it was within his realm of influence. Regardless of what happened, he could instantly receive information. Furthermore, building Dragon Tiger Tower in East Sea City would further strengthen his control over the city.

Now that the location was selected, the next step was to subcontract the project, striving to complete construction in the shortest possible time.

Ling Chen had already planned that Dragon Tiger Tower didn't need to be built too high; three or four stories would suffice. In this regard, Tang Guolun was undoubtedly an expert. After all, he was an escape artist who knew how to construct a fortress-like defensive building.

Not half an hour after receiving his call, Tang Guolun arrived at Ling Chen's location. Examining the spot Ling Chen had chosen, Tang Guolun remarked, "This is a nice place, according to your requirements, it might take up to six months to complete."

"Six months? Isn't that too long? Boss Tang, can't you speed it up?"

"No problem, as long as there's money, anything is possible. We can hire more construction teams to work overtime, day and night, probably finish in two to three months. However, the costs may double or even increase further."

Ling Chen smiled faintly, indifferent, and said, "Money isn't an issue. Just ask the big guy for funds, however much you need."

"OK!" With Ling Chen's assurance, Tang Guolun promptly sought construction teams to take on the job.

Meanwhile,

At the Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion.

Knock, knock, knock!

"Come in."

Su Mei pushed open the door and walked into Su He's room, seeing him seated on an old rattan chair, eyes fixed on the gradually withering leaves outside the window, exuding a natural and harmonious aura.

Looking at this simple room, Su Mei appeared somewhat helpless. There were plenty of accommodations at Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion, yet Su He insisted on living in his old room which hadn't been inhabited for over a decade, exposed to the elements and now worn out.

"Girl, what brings you to me?" Su He didn't turn around. Without his orders, no one would disturb him. Although he had returned to Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion, Su Mei was the Pavilion Master, handling both big and small matters while Su He continued living peacefully.

"Grandfather, why haven't you gone out for a walk these days? Staying cooped up in the room every day might harm your health."

Su He chuckled softly, "Your grandfather's health isn't that fragile." He sighed lightly, "After being alone for so long, I'm not accustomed to environments with many people; it's more tranquil to be alone. By the way, is there news about Ling Kun?"

"Nothing yet. The Heavenly Mechanism Order was issued almost half a month ago, but Ling Kun is still missing."

"If he were easy to find, there would be no need for the Heavenly Mechanism Order. Girl, if Ling Kun really did collude in murdering your parents, what will you do?"

Su Mei opened her mouth but ultimately chose silence. If it were before, she would have told Su He without hesitation that the culprit must pay with blood. However, ever since learning about Ling Kun's identity, Su Mei was torn by a difficult choice.

Ling Kun was Ling Chen's father; killing Ling Kun would sever the relationship between Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion and Ling Chen. But what worried Su Mei the most was Ling Chen turning Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion into an enemy.

"Grandfather, what's your thoughts? Ling Chen is your disciple..."

"If Ling Kun really did it, I will definitely kill him; there's no need to hesitate about that. As for Ling Chen, he's a promising talent, but unfortunately, I can't have both. If the relationship is severed, so be it. If he

insists on revenge against us, then we'll have no choice but to deal with him as well to eliminate future troubles."

Hearing this, Su Mei's heart trembled slightly, evidently surprised by Su He's decisiveness.

"Girl, as the Pavilion Master of Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion, you absolutely mustn't be soft-hearted. Some matters require decisiveness; otherwise, they will only lead to endless trouble."

"Yes, I understand."

"Go now, let me have some peace. Unless it's urgent, don't disturb me."

Coming out of the room, Su Mei looked up at the sky. Not long ago, it was clear and cloudless, but now it was covered with thick clouds, a heavy rain was imminent.

Reflecting on the conversation with Su He, Su Mei felt gloomy, as if something was blocking her chest, making it hard to breathe. She had always regarded Ling Chen as a very good friend, and being the Pavilion Master of Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion, having friends was a luxury. Ling Chen was the only one she could talk to. But no one expected such circumstances would arise.

The drizzle descended from above, and Su Mei sighed softly, hoping one day she wouldn't have to stand against Ling Chen.

Chapter 1096 - 1103: Martial Arts Bottleneck

A month passed, and everything was proceeding methodically.

Ling Chen's life also returned to normal, basically revolving around the same three places: his home, the base, and the construction site.

The project under Tang Guolun's charge advanced quickly, with three construction teams working together, nearly a hundred people in total. In just a month, the main framework was almost completed. Ling Chen visited the site every day to inspect the work. The architectural plans for Dragon Tiger Tower were designed by Tang Guolun, and Ling Chen, after a brief review, entrusted him with the task entirely.

Ling Chen knew Tang Guolun's capabilities well, and since he trusted him, he let him handle things without interference. There was no need to play the expert when he wasn't.

Aside from the construction of Dragon Tiger Tower, Ling Chen's greatest concern was Ling Kun. However, as time passed, Ling Kun and the porridge girl seemed to have vanished without a trace.

"Hey! Ling Chen, do you think... the people from Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion might have captured your father?" asked Hu Fei.

"No." Ling Chen had his suspicions before, prompting him to contact Song Ge from Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion for information. Due to Su Zhengyang and his wife's situation, Ling Chen found it inappropriate to contact Su Mei directly, making Song Ge his only communication channel.

Fortunately, despite the many incidents occurring at Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion, Song Ge's attitude towards Ling Chen remained unchanged. From Song Ge, Ling Chen learned that Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion hadn't captured Ling Kun, but they had intensified their efforts and expanded their search range.

"I believe your father might have gone abroad. Otherwise, it's impossible that there's absolutely no news."

Ling Chen had considered Hu Fei's guess. If that were the case, he could breathe a sigh of relief. After all, Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion, despite its vast influence, was limited to domestic affairs and hadn't extended its reach abroad. Thus, as long as Ling Kun stayed abroad, he would be safe.

Returning home, Ling Chen lingered a while in the living room, chatting with Yang Qingling, then went to his room.

Lately, Ling Chen devoted most of his energy to enhancing his skills. He was preparing for the worst; if Ling Kun were connected to Su Zhengyang and his wife's deaths, his relationship with Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion would undoubtedly become strained. Therefore, more than any other means, improving oneself was paramount.

The Prajnaparamita Sutra was an Internal Cultivation Method Ling Chen had never abandoned. However, the progress slowed as he advanced, practically stagnant like a turtle's pace. After reaching the Earthly List ranking, Ling Chen felt he hadn't progressed for a long time, lingering in place.

It wasn't due to laziness; no matter how busy each day was, Ling Chen would make time to reinforce the Prajnaparamita Sutra. Yet, it seemed to have hit a bottleneck, requiring a specific opportunity to break through.

Months ago, at Han Mingchao's home, Ling Chen and Leng Feifei had a significant encounter. Based on the characteristics of Prajnaparamita Sutra, there should have been substantial improvement, but surprisingly, the Sutra remained as calm as water.

Ling Chen remembered He Ziyun once mentioning that all top-tier mental methods encounter several challenges, and overcoming them leads to a new realm. This was Ling Chen's current pressing issue.

From the martial arts manuals obtained from the Ling Family, Ling Chen had meticulously reviewed them. Despite possessing many long-lost skills and Inner Strength methods, they offered no solution to Ling Chen's current dilemma.

"Better to learn thoroughly than superficially!"

With this belief, Ling Chen forsook the practice of other martial arts, focusing all his mind on the Prajnaparamita Sutra.

During meditation with closed eyes, he lost track of time until his phone rang from the bedside.

Picking up the phone, Ling Chen glanced at the incoming call number on the screen, feeling a bit curious, unsure who was calling.

Upon answering, Ling Chen said "Hello," and asked, "Who is this?"

"It's me."

Hearing the familiar voice over the phone, Ling Chen immediately recognized who it was.

Lin Qiqi!

During the siege on the Ling Family, Lin Qiqi, following Ling Chen's advice, escaped first and was not caught by Pang Jiulin. Back then, Lin Qiqi had taken Ling Chen's phone number, promising to contact him later. Now, more than a month had passed, and she finally had news.

"Miss Lin, are you okay?"

"You don't need to worry about that. I'm contacting you to inform you that a core figure from the Ling Family has been residing secretly in East Sea City. I recently obtained this information. As for the person's address, I haven't discovered it yet."

Core figure?

Ling Chen was taken aback. He thought the Ling Family's important figures had all fled abroad, but unexpectedly, one remained hidden in East Sea City.

"I understand. Miss Lin, thank you for providing this information."

"Don't thank me. I just want revenge, that's all. Alright, I can't talk much now. I'll notify you when I find more clues," Lin Qiqi said before hanging up abruptly.

Setting down the phone, Ling Chen turned to look out the window, his gaze flickering slightly. Lin Qiqi's information wasn't exactly good news; a core figure hidden in East Sea City undoubtedly posed a problem, potentially monitoring his every move.

While pondering, his phone rang again—it was Hu Fei.

"Hey! Fatty, what's up?"

"Do you have time now? I have a major discovery. You better come over," Hu Fei said with a trace of excitement, suggesting he had made a significant breakthrough.

"Hold on, I'm on my way."

Leaving his house, Ling Chen drove his Audi towards the base. Halfway through, he gradually reduced his speed, glanced at the rearview mirror, and slightly curved his lips.

For the past few days, Ling Chen felt he was being followed whenever he went out. However, his driving skills allowed him to easily shake off pursuers. But today was different; they seemed to have increased their personnel. Previously there was only one car; now it's increased to five, indicating they no longer wanted to lose track of him.

Ling Chen had always wondered who was tailing him, and after receiving Lin Qiqi's call, he speculated that the mastermind might be the Ling Family's core figure.

"Alright! Since you want to play, I'll play along."

With this thought, Ling Chen floored the accelerator, and the Audi's speed surged, overtaking several cars.

At this point, the five trailing cars couldn't be bothered about being discovered. They quickly increased their speed, sticking closely behind Ling Chen's car to prevent him from slipping away again.

Ten minutes passed and the number of vehicles on the road dwindled. Ling Chen was now on a small road leading to the outskirts. In this area, buildings were sparse, and traffic was low, allowing the car speed to be pushed to its limit.

Seeing Ling Chen gradually pull away, the five cars following him accelerated immediately, maintaining a distance of approximately 20 meters.

Chapter 1097 - 1104: Zhu Hong's Whereabouts (1)

Looking at the cars slowly catching up in the rearview mirror, Ling Chen couldn't help but laugh. These people really are amateurs.

Suddenly, Ling Chen swiftly turned the steering wheel, combined with the brakes. The Audi's body swayed sharply, stopping steadily in the middle of the road, blocking the entire street.

Seeing this, the five cars trailing behind hurriedly stopped.

Before the people in those cars could get out, Ling Chen pushed open the car door, sprinted forward, stepped onto the roof of the first car, and leaped over in mid-air. In the blink of an eye, Ling Chen rushed to the front of the last car.

At this moment, the car door behind opened. A few men just got out and hadn't regained their footing when Ling Chen's fist already smashed toward them. However, unexpectedly, one man reacted quickly, crossing his arms to forcibly block Ling Chen's steel fist.

With his fist being obstructed, Ling Chen's expression changed slightly, his eyes showing a hint of surprise. This guy could actually block his attack!

Although he didn't use his full strength in this punch, it still had two-tenths of its power, which an ordinary person couldn't withstand. A martial artist! After a slight pause, Ling Chen quickly realized that this man in front of him definitely practiced martial arts. Thinking of this, Ling Chen no longer held back, increasing his strength by a few notches.

Mountain Collapse!

At the moment he bumped his shoulder forward, the man's body was like a kite with a broken string, flying straight up and then crashing heavily to the ground.

Turns out that's all he's got. Ling Chen smiled faintly, thinking he had met a master. Knowing these people's capabilities, Ling Chen unleashed his fists, and it didn't take long before the members from the car behind were all laid flat on the ground.

Ling Chen's fighting strategy was strategic, solving the people in the last car first. This way, with the car blocking the road, the four cars in the middle could neither advance nor retreat, leaving them no escape route.

Clapping his hands, Ling Chen leisurely looked at the others. There were quite a number of them, no less than a dozen, all males in their twenties or thirties.

"Guys, who are you? I don't seem to have any grudge with you, so why are you secretly following me?"

An older man looked at Ling Chen, his eyes flickering, not knowing what he was thinking. Suddenly, he waved his large hand and said solemnly, "Let's go!" As his voice fell, more than a dozen men didn't hesitate, abandoning the car in place, dispersing and escaping separately.

Watching those people flee far away, Ling Chen did not chase after them, only feeling a bit bewildered. These people were secretly tailing him, clearly came for him. But now that they had a confrontation, they didn't make a move and instead ran away, what's going on?

Thinking for a moment, Ling Chen turned his gaze to the men lying on the ground. Walking up close, Ling Chen crouched in front of one of them, searching around. Soon, he found an ID card in the jacket pocket.

From the information on the ID card, this person was a librarian.

Library? Ling Chen was slightly stunned, but quickly he understood what this library stood for.

Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion!

Narrowing his eyes, Ling Chen's face looked somewhat unpleasant. Before, when he was in Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion, he talked with Su Mei and others. Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion had many branches, existing in various forms, including libraries.

Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion couldn't find Ling Kun, so it sent someone to watch him, to see if he was in contact with Ling Kun. Ling Chen could understand Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion's approach, but he felt a bit uneasy in his heart. Currently, it was only a suspicion about Ling Kun, not confirmed yet, but sending people to monitor him was undoubtedly the biggest distrust towards himself. It was obvious that Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion was also on guard against him.

...

"Hello! Pavilion Master."

In a small room of the library, the man previously leading the surveillance on Ling Chen dialed Su Mei's phone.

"What's the matter?" Su Mei's calm voice came through the phone.

"Pavilion Master, sorry, our cover has been blown."

"No incident occurred, right?"

"A few brothers got hurt, but nothing serious. Pavilion Master, should we continue the surveillance?"

Su Mei hesitated for a moment and asked, "Did he... did he notice your identity?"

"I'm not sure about that, but we didn't carry anything related to Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion on us, so he probably didn't recognize us."

"Okay then, continue to monitor. Remember, try to keep a low profile, don't alarm the target."

"Rest assured, Pavilion Master, I know what to do."

At this moment, Ling Chen had already driven to the base.

Coming to the control center, since Tang Guolun was busy building Dragon Tiger Tower, only Hu Fei was there.

"Fatty, why did you call me over?" Judging from Hu Fei's phone call, there must be significant findings; otherwise, he wouldn't have rushed him over in such haste.

Hu Fei grinned, saying, "Haven't you always wanted to find that bastard Zhu Hong's whereabouts? I'm telling you, I've found it."

"Really?" Ling Chen's eyes lit up, this was indeed good news. He had long entrusted Hu Fei to use all resources to search for Zhu Hong's whereabouts throughout East Sea City, but unfortunately, there had been no progress. Now, after a few months, there was finally a breakthrough.

"Fatty, where's the person?"

Hu Fei went to the big screen in the control center, tapping on the keyboard a few times. Soon, the big screen displayed a map, with a building marked in red.

"See that, Zhu Hong is hiding right here. He's quite clever, choosing a remote slum. There's no surveillance there, high traffic, lots of foreign residents, very convenient for hiding his whereabouts."

"Is your intel reliable?" Ling Chen needed to confirm.

Hu Fei patted his chest and assured, "Don't worry, there's absolutely no problem." Then Hu Fei proudly laughed and said, "Do you want to know how I found them?"

"Let's hear it." Ling Chen was indeed curious. Zhu Hong was too cunning, there wasn't the slightest clue after searching for so long. He remembered the last time Hu Fei mentioned a good method to find Zhu Hong. Now it seemed probable that method worked.

"This time I didn't target Zhu Hong, but rather Song Mingzhe. Doesn't Song Mingzhe raise raptors? Such a big hawk, how much meat does it eat in a day? This is East Sea City, facing the sea to the east, there's no wild fowl to catch. So, for Song Mingzhe to feed his hawk, he must buy a large amount of fresh meat from the market. Through this point, I sent people to investigate major markets and supermarkets, and finally found a clue. Based on the clue and through tracking and investigation, I pinpointed this location."

"Not bad." Ling Chen nodded with a smile and said, "You're all fat, but it turns out you have some brains."

Hearing this, Hu Fei's eyes widened, disgruntledly saying, "Are you complimenting me or dissing me?"

Chapter 1098 - 1105: Zhu Hong's Whereabouts (Part 2)

"Alright, let's stop joking around." Ling Chen collected himself and said seriously, "Have you sent anyone to check it out?"

"I sent Kaelina and Qin Genglong. They've been staking out nearby for two days and nights. According to their feedback, Chu Huaiyang appeared there this morning, seemingly to replenish food supplies. I'm concerned something might go wrong, so I told them to stay put. Now that we've found Zhu Hong's whereabouts, should we go all out?"

Ling Chen didn't speak; instead, he carefully examined the large screen map. Taking action is easy, but as Hu Fei just mentioned, the place has many outsiders and heavy foot traffic. Zhu Hong picked such a place for a reason: the more people there are, the easier it is to escape. Therefore, before making a move, they must be fully prepared to prevent Zhu Hong and his group from escaping again.

Although Dragon Tiger Tower hasn't been established yet, Ling Chen doesn't lack manpower. In fact, ever since the Secret Society joined, he has hundreds of people at his disposal. After assigning tasks, Ling Chen didn't stay long at the base and drove straight to Zhu Hong's residence.

Outside the slum area, Ling Chen parked the car and looked around, frowning slightly. Hu Fei mentioned there were many people, but he didn't expect the crowd to be this large. The relatively narrow street was lined with many stalls, the middle lane only wide enough for one car, and with the heavy foot traffic, vehicles couldn't pass through at all.

This was a big problem.

With such a dense crowd, taking action was simply impossible. Otherwise, once Zhu Hong and his people blended into the crowd, finding them again would be difficult.

Walking along the road to the inside, there was a vegetable market nearby, flanked by single-story houses and three-story old buildings. Being a slum, most of the residents were migrant workers, with many workers in vests easily seen, and the air was filled with a peculiar smell.

Seeing such an environment, Ling Chen felt a bit of admiration for Zhu Hong. He knew Zhu Hong had a taste for life's finer things, yet to avoid him, Zhu Hong had actually moved to such a place, which was truly surprising.

In a private room of a small restaurant in the slum area, Ling Chen met with Kaelina and Qin Genglong. The two were by the window, observing the situation outside.

"How's it going? Any developments?" Ling Chen asked.

Kaelina pointed outside the window and said, "There's a stairway entrance there. Zhu Hong and his team live inside, but I haven't yet figured out which room they're in."

Ling Chen took a few glances and nodded, "If Zhu Hong is there, Chen Quan and the others are likely there too. Their skills aren't weak, and Zhu Hong is very cautious, with certain precautions in place. Rushing in could get us spotted."

"Why don't you take a look?" Kaelina suggested. "The two of us are too conspicuous, easily attracting attention."

Kaelina was right. As a foreigner with blonde hair and blue eyes and a striking appearance, she would undoubtedly stand out in such a slum. As for Qin Genglong, his training in Cross Training made him muscular and taller than the average person, equally noticeable. If these two entered, they'd surely be discovered.

Ling Chen thought for a moment, then his eyes suddenly lit up, and he immediately had an idea.

"Wait here. I'll be right back." Leaving behind Kaelina and Qin Genglong, who were puzzled, Ling Chen left the private room directly.

More than ten minutes later, the door outside the room was pushed open. Kaelina looked carefully and, with a cold expression, asked, "Who are you looking for?"

She thought it was Ling Chen coming back, but it turned out to be a construction worker, reeking of sweat, with a bushy beard, wearing a filthy red vest.

"Um... sorry, I think I... I walked into the wrong room." The construction worker apologized with a sheepish smile and quickly backed out.

However, a few seconds later, the construction worker walked back in.

Qin Genglong glared and stood up, shouting, "What do you want?"

The man laughed heartily and grinned, "What, you two still don't recognize me?"

Upon hearing the familiar voice, Kaelina and Qin Genglong were momentarily stunned, then realized that the construction worker was actually Ling Chen in disguise.

There's no denying that Ling Chen's disguise was remarkably convincing. Without looking closely, they hadn't recognized him at all. After all, with so many construction workers around, who would suspect someone like this?

"Not bad." Kaelina leaned closer to Ling Chen, looking him up and down, clearly interested in his attire.

"Of course, having teamed up with Bai Huanjun for so long, I've picked up a thing or two." Ling Chen said confidently, "Alright, wait here for my news. I'm going in to check."

Arriving at the stairway Kaelina mentioned, Ling Chen looked around and saw a gas cylinder nearby. He hoisted it onto his shoulder and started heading upstairs. This old building had three floors, with five to six households on each floor. Ling Chen carried the gas cylinder, visiting each unit one by one. It was right around quitting time, so every household had their doors open, which made Ling Chen's investigation easier.

Soon, Ling Chen reached the third floor. At a glance, out of the five households on the third floor, only three had their doors open, while the other two were closed, making it unclear if anyone was inside. If Kaelina wasn't mistaken, Chu Huaiyang had been seen coming and going here, so Zhu Hong and his crew were likely in one of these two units.

Something isn't right!

It's possible both these units house Zhu Hong's people. Ling Chen noticed earlier that the apartments were very small, only about forty to fifty square meters. With four people, packing into one room would be quite cramped.

Thinking it through, Ling Chen saw someone exiting one of the closed units, and it was Chu Huaiyang. Ling Chen quickly lowered his head to avoid making eye contact. At that moment, Chu Huaiyang was carrying a few bowls, heading straight to the door of the neighboring unit and knocking.

Ling Chen, ever observant, noticed that Chu Huaiyang's knocking pattern was very rhythmic: four short knocks and two long ones. Soon, the door opened, but unfortunately, the person inside didn't step out, preventing Ling Chen from identifying them.

After handing the bowls inside, Chu Huaiyang didn't enter but instead returned to his previous unit.

Finally caught up with you all!

Ling Chen secretly smiled to himself. Without a doubt, Zhu Hong and his group were living within these two units. Having confirmed his target, Ling Chen didn't linger and quickly returned to the room where Kaelina was waiting.

"Kaelina, inform Fatty that we're moving tonight. Tell him to prepare." Ling Chen said. The heavy daytime foot traffic posed a risk of accidental injuries and the possibility of Zhu Hong and his crew escaping by blending into the crowd. Hence, the nighttime was undoubtedly the best time to act.

Chapter 1099 - 1106: Night Raid

Night falls.

The slum at eleven o'clock is silent, pitch black without a hint of light. Most of the people living here are workers, tired after a long day, eager to rest early.

At this moment, more than a dozen shadows appear on the streets of the slum, slowly approaching the target location. In front of the building, Ling Chen looks at the stairway devoid of light and gestures to the people behind him. Quickly, a white male nods and leads a team swiftly into the stairway.

This white male is none other than Beison, whom Ling Chen hired from abroad. Beison is an experienced mercenary with considerable skills. For this operation, Ling Chen specifically brought his team.

A few minutes later, Ling Chen's earpiece crackles with the sound of static. This is the signal he agreed on with Beison, indicating that Beison and his team are in place and ready to act.

Right now, Ling Chen instructs Qin Genglong to be ready to take action at any moment. After giving instructions, Ling Chen heads up the stairs alone, directly to the third floor. He had already scouted the area during the day, so he confidently moves to the door of one of the rooms.

Four short and two long knocks.

This is the rhythm Chu Huaiyang uses to knock on the door. After knocking, Ling Chen quickly moves aside, quietly waiting. Soon, the lock clicks, and the door opens from the inside. At the moment the door opens, Ling Chen doesn't hesitate and strikes with a steel punch, hitting the person opening the door hard.

The room Ling Chen chose belongs to Chu Huaiyang; only Chu Huaiyang was seen entering during the day, with no sight of others, so Ling Chen wasn't sure where the other three were residing. Compared to the others, Chu Huaiyang is relatively easier to handle, so he decided to deal with Chu Huaiyang's room first.

As his steel punch lands, Ling Chen immediately feels the impact, indicating he hit his target. Although the surroundings are dark, Ling Chen can vaguely see the face of his opponent.

Song Mingzhe!

Unexpectedly, his punch hits Song Mingzhe. Standing inside the door, Song Mingzhe had no idea he would be attacked. Hearing sounds from outside the door, he assumed it was Zhu Hong visiting, thus he let his guard down.

As an Earthly List expert, Ling Chen's punch is tough to endure.

Wham!

Song Mingzhe spits out blood, turning his face instantly pale.

After landing the hit, Ling Chen doesn't stop. Without allowing Song Mingzhe any chance to react, Ling Chen steps forward and punches repeatedly, each blow aimed at Song Mingzhe's chest. After five consecutive punches, Ling Chen can feel Song Mingzhe's chest starting to cave in.

At this moment, a figure rushes towards Ling Chen, lashing out at his face with a palm strike.

Ling Chen doesn't need to look to know it's Chu Huaiyang. Without hesitation, Ling Chen withdraws his fist, quickly stepping back to avoid Chu Huaiyang's attack. At this point, with Song Mingzhe seriously injured, he loses his ability to fight.

One Chu Huaiyang isn't much of a match for Ling Chen.

However, Ling Chen doesn't confront Chu Huaiyang directly. His goal is explicit: use stealth to reduce their numbers. Losing a skilled fighter is undoubtedly a severe blow to Zhu Hong and the others.

Time to go!

Ling Chen evades several waves of attacks from Chu Huaiyang, slowly moving towards the window. The commotion made in this room will definitely alert Zhu Hong and Chen Quan. Once they arrive, escape will be impossible.

The power of Heavenly List experts is not to be underestimated.

Hurried footsteps approach, and Ling Chen glances sideways, seeing two figures outside the door. As expected, Chen Quan and Zhu Hong rushed over at top speed. Before they can get close, Ling Chen focuses all his strength, pushing Chu Huaiyang back with a punch, and then leaps, crashing through the window, jumping directly down.

"Chu Huaiyang, what's going on?" Zhu Hong asks.

"It's Ling Chen." Chu Huaiyang, looking at the blood-spewing Song Mingzhe on the ground, says grimly, "Uncle Song is injured and needs urgent hospital treatment. We..."

"We don't have time to waste on him," Zhu Hong interrupts before Chu Huaiyang can finish, "Since Ling Chen found his way here, he surely came prepared. Bringing along an injured burden will only slow us down, and none of us will escape."

Listening to Zhu Hong's merciless words, Chu Huaiyang wants to say something, but Chen Quan interjects, "Zhu Hong is right. We don't have time to care for him now. Let's break out of here."

As soon as the words fall, there's a sudden crisp sound inside the room, as if something drops to the ground. The trio turns to look, unable to make out the object but can smell a pungent odor.

This isn't good!

"It's a smoke grenade, run!" Zhu Hong shouts, barely taking a step before a strong flash blinds his vision, causing immense eye pain.

Besides the smoke grenade, there's a flash grenade, something Zhu Hong hadn't expected. Among the trio, Chen Quan reacts fastest, dodging just as the flash grenade explodes, minimizing the impact.

"Out the window," Chen Quan instructs sharply, grabbing Zhu Hong and dashing through the window.

Chu Huaiyang looks at the pale-faced Song Mingzhe lying on the ground, eyes filled with struggle. Regardless, Song Mingzhe is his comrade. Leaving him to escape alone feels wrong. Nevertheless, there's no time for hesitation. Chu Huaiyang grits his teeth, following Chen Quan's path out the window.

As he exits the window, Chu Huaiyang balances himself for landing. But he quickly realizes that he's bumped into something soft after jumping out.

What's going on?

After a brief daze, Chu Huaiyang focuses, shocked to see a layer of iron netting outside the window. His body is caught right in it. Just like him, Chen Quan and Zhu Hong hang trapped in the netting.

How did this happen? Ling Chen also jumped out the window earlier, so why... On realizing this, Chu Huaiyang understands.

Ling Chen's real aim was to lure them out, using the smoke grenade and flash grenade to force them out through the window.

"Retrieve!"

A soft command sounds, and the entire iron net contracts, ensnaring Zhu Hong and his partners completely.

Witnessing their predicament, Chen Quan's face turns livid. He coldly orders, "Take care of Zhu Hong." Then, with a powerful shout, Chen Quan grabs the iron net, ripping it open with force.

As a Heavenly List expert, his power stands apart, his strength formidable. Under Chen Quan's exertion, the sturdy iron net tears open with a gap.

Chapter 1100 - 1107: Ji Gang Makes His Move

The iron net was torn open, and Chen Quan immediately drilled his way out, followed closely by Chu Huaiyang and Zhu Hong. At this moment, Beison and his team had already surrounded the three of them. Chen Quan scanned his surroundings without hesitation, swiftly stepping forward like a gust of wind, instantly disappearing from his original spot.

By the time everyone reacted, they saw that Chen Quan's body was already near Ling Chen.

Capture the ringleader first! Chen Quan knew Ling Chen was the leader of these people. As long as he controlled Ling Chen, the others would be hesitant to act, fearing the consequences.

Seeing Chen Quan rapidly approaching, Ling Chen slightly curled his lips into a faint smile, showing no sign of fear despite Chen Quan's attack.

Something's amiss?

Chen Quan's heart sank; Ling Chen's smile stirred a strong sense of unease within him. Facing an attack from a Heavenly List master, no one would smile unless that person had a death wish. Ling Chen was evidently not such a person, judging from his fearless demeanor, he must have relied on something.

As his thoughts raced, a fierce gust of wind suddenly struck. Through the corner of his eye, Chen Quan saw only a blurred figure quickly closing in.

So fast! Chen Quan's pupils constricted, utterly astounded. Regardless of who this figure was, their speed and strength were far beyond what ordinary experts could achieve.

Heavenly List... a Heavenly List master! In an instant, Chen Quan confirmed the person's identity.

Indeed, without the assistance of a Heavenly List master, even if Ling Chen had the guts, he wouldn't dare come seeking trouble with him. There was no time to contemplate further; Chen Quan quickly withdrew his offensive, retreating backward. If he continued to attack, even if he managed to harm Ling Chen, he would suffer heavy blows from the Heavenly List master, making it not worthwhile.

With that retreat, Chen Quan immediately saw the Heavenly List master on the opposite side.

Ji Gang!

Confirming Ji Gang's identity, Chen Quan was shocked. How... how could this be? Ji Gang was clearly part of the God Organization, the nemesis of Ling Chen, so why did he suddenly switch sides to help Ling Chen against him?

At this moment, not only Chen Quan but also Chu Huaiyang and Zhu Hong were stunned. Chen Quan was their only reliance to escape, but now, a Heavenly List master intercepted them, instantly obliterating their advantage.

Beneath his mask, Zhu Hong frowned, eyes darkened, mind racing for countermeasures. Tonight was a calamity for him; if he couldn't escape, he would die here. No! He couldn't die, at least not now. Zhu Hong bit his lip silently; he had too many wishes left unfulfilled and could not die here. Moreover, he most certainly did not want to die at Ling Chen's hands, as that would be a defeat too painful to bear.

"Ji Gang, why?" Chen Quan stared coldly at Ji Gang, asking solemnly, "Are you going to betray your master?"

Confronted by Chen Quan's question, Ji Gang stood motionless beside Ling Chen, showing no response, as if he hadn't heard the question.

Seeing Ji Gang's change, Chen Quan's heart sank, and he immediately turned his gaze to Ling Chen, "How did you do it?" Undoubtedly, Chen Quan did not believe Ji Gang would turn to Ling Chen; in his view, Ling Chen must have used some improper means.

"I think that's not something you should be concerned about," Ling Chen said blandly, "Chen Quan, you've been hiding long enough; tonight is the time for conclusions."

Chen Quan's expression slightly changed; without Ji Gang, he would find Ling Chen's words laughable. However, facing a Heavenly List master, he lacked full confidence. Moreover, during his previous collaboration with the God Organization, he had sparred with Ji Gang, knowing his formidable strength, not the kind found in newly graduated Heavenly List experts. According to his judgment, Ji Gang's power was ranked at least eighth in the Heavenly List, solid in foundation, undoubtedly a difficult opponent.

"Ji Gang, capture him." Ling Chen commanded softly, and Ji Gang, standing quietly by, immediately sprang into action, rushing toward Chen Quan.

Ji Gang moved swiftly, appearing in front of Chen Quan in the blink of an eye, delivering a palm strike. Though it looked gentle, with seemingly no force, Chen Quan felt the thick Inner Strength, like a majestic mountain, charging in with overwhelming momentum.

Chen Quan did not take the strike head-on, not because he couldn't withstand Ji Gang's attack, but to conserve energy. Ji Gang was slightly stronger than him; if he were to go head-to-head, he would inevitably fall behind. Therefore, the most prudent approach was to drag it out, letting Ji Gang expend all his stamina. At that point, he would have the opportunity to counterattack and win the battle.

Ling Chen stood at the forefront of the crowd, his attention focused entirely on the battle between Chen Quan and Ji Gang. Watching for a while, Ling Chen was somewhat dissatisfied with Ji Gang's performance. He had witnessed Ji Gang's formidable power, but during the clash with Chen Quan, Ji Gang's strength was at most seventy percent effective. Ling Chen understood this; Ji Gang's actions were all controlled by the microchip in his brain, meaning he had lost the ability to think and judge, relying solely on his instinct.

Consequently, this obviously limited Ji Gang's performance. In expert duels, aside from one's sheer strength, adaptability and calculating the opponent are essential elements that Ji Gang now clearly lacked.

Because of this reason, Ji Gang, who would normally overpower his opponent, could only fight Chen Quan to a draw at this moment.

Since the battle here wouldn't be resolved quickly, Ling Chen turned his gaze to Chu Huaiyang and Zhu Hong, with Zhu Hong as his primary target, regardless of how Chen Quan and Chu Huaiyang ended up; Zhu Hong must not escape tonight.

At this moment, Chu Huaiyang and Zhu Hong's attention was focused solely on Chen Quan. Hearing footsteps approaching, the weakest Zhu Hong was ironically the first to react. He turned his head, looking at the swiftly approaching Ling Chen, his eyes turning cold.

"Chu Huaiyang, hold him off."

Chu Huaiyang nodded, reaching out to shield Zhu Hong behind him.

"Give up," Ling Chen said softly, "do you think you still have a chance to escape tonight?"

Squinting, Zhu Hong replied coldly, "Ling Chen, don't rejoice too soon; as long as I'm alive, anything is possible."

"Is that so? Well, then, I'll see what else you're capable of." With these words, Ling Chen's body slightly leaned forward, tapping his right foot on the ground. In an instant, his body moved like a leopard, dashing forward.

A blur passed, and Chu Huaiyang saw only a dark shadow. Before his hands could rise, a power engulfed him, striking him directly. With this hit, Chu Huaiyang felt as if he was struck by surging waves, instantly knocked away.

One move, just one move, and Chu Huaiyang's defense was dismantled.